

## St. Thomas Aquinas

# The Summa Theologica

(Benziger Bros. edition, 1947)

Translated by

Fathers of the English Dominican Province

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### OF THOSE WHO HAVE FAITH (FOUR ARTICLES)

We must now consider those who have faith: under which head there are four points of inquiry:

- (1) Whether there was faith in the angels, or in man, in their original state?
  - (2) Whether the demons have faith?
  - (3) Whether those heretics who err in one article, have faith in others?
  - (4) Whether among those who have faith, one has it more than another?
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### Whether there was faith in the angels, or in man, in their original state?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that there was no faith, either in the angels, or in man, in their original state. For Hugh St. Victor says in his Sentences (De Sacram. i, 10) that "man cannot see God or things that are in God, because he closes his eyes to contemplation." Now the angels, in their original state, before they were either confirmed in grace, or had fallen from it, had their eyes opened to contemplation, since "they saw things in the Word," according to Augustine (Gen. ad lit. ii, 8). Likewise the first man, while in the state of innocence, seemingly had his eyes open to contemplation; for Hugh St. Victor says (De Sacram. i, 6) that "in his original state man knew his Creator, not by the mere outward perception of hearing, but by inward inspiration, not as now believers seek an absent God by faith, but by seeing Him clearly

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**Objection 2:** Further, the knowledge of faith is dark and obscure, according to 1 Cor. 13:13: "We see now through a glass in a dark manner." Now in their original state there was not obscurity either in the angels or in man, because it is a punishment of sin. Therefore there could be no faith in the angels or in man, in their original state.

**Objection 3:** Further, the Apostle says ([Rm. 10:17](#)) that "faith... cometh by hearing." Now this could not apply to angels and man in their original state; for then they could not hear anything from another. Therefore, in that state, there was no faith either in man or in the angels.

**On the contrary,** It is written ([Heb. 11:6](#)): "He that cometh to God, must believe." Now the original state of angels and man was one of approach to God. Therefore they had need of faith.

**I answer that,** Some say that there was no faith in the angels before they were confirmed in grace or fell from it, and in man before he sinned, by reason of the manifest contemplation that they had of Divine things. Since, however, "faith is the evidence of things that appear not," according to the Apostle ([Heb. 11:2](#)), and since "by faith we believe what we see not," according to Augustine (Tract. xl in Joan.; Questions. Evang. ii, qu. 39), that manifestation alone excludes faith, which renders apparent or seen the principal object of faith. Now the principal object of faith is the First Truth, the sight of which gives the happiness of heaven and takes the place of faith. Consequently, as the angels before their confirmation in grace, and man before sin, did not possess the happiness whereby God is seen in His Essence, it is evident that the knowledge they possessed was not such as to exclude faith.

It follows then, that the absence of faith in them could only be explained by their being altogether ignorant of the object of faith. And if man and the angels were created in a purely natural state, as some [\*St. Bonaventure, Sent. ii, D, 29] hold, perhaps one might hold that there was no faith in the angels before their confirmation in grace, or in man before sin, because the knowledge of faith surpasses not only a man's but even an angel's natural knowledge about God.

Since, however, we stated in the FP, Question [62], Article [3]; FP, Question [95], Article [1] that man and the angels were created with the gift of grace, we must needs say that there was in them a certain beginning of hoped-for happiness, by reason of grace received but not yet consummated, which happiness was begun in their will by hope and charity, and in the intellect by faith, as stated above ([Question \[4\]](#), [Article \[7\]](#)). Consequently we must hold that the angels had faith before they were confirmed, and man, before he sinned. Nevertheless we must observe that in the object of faith, there is something formal, as it were, namely the First Truth surpassing all the natural knowledge of a creature, and something material, namely, the thing to which we assent while adhering to the First Truth. With regard to the former, before obtaining the happiness to come, faith is common to all who have knowledge of God, by adhering to the First Truth: whereas with regard to the things which are proposed as the material object of faith, some are believed by one, and known manifestly by another, even in the present state, as we have shown above ([Question \[1\]](#), [Article \[5\]](#); [Question \[2\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#), ad 2). In this respect, too, it may be said that the angels before being confirmed, and man, before sin, possessed manifest knowledge about certain points in the Divine mysteries, which now we cannot know except by believing them.

**Reply to Objection 1:** Although the words of Hugh of St. Victor are those of a master, and have the force of an authority, yet it may be said that the contemplation which removes the need of

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[Donate bitcoin](#). St. Isidore [e-book library/forum](#) » [aquinas](#) » [english](#) » [summa](#) » [SS](#) » [SS005.html](#) the angels did not possess this contemplation before they were confirmed, nor did man before he sinned: yet their contemplation was of a higher order than ours, for by its means they approached nearer to God, and had manifest knowledge of more of the Divine effects and mysteries than we can have knowledge of. Hence faith was not in them so that they sought an absent God as we seek Him: since by the light of wisdom He was more present to them than He is to us, although He was not so present to them as He is to the Blessed by the light of glory.

**Reply to Objection 2:** There was no darkness of sin or punishment in the original state of man and the angels, but there was a certain natural obscurity in the human and angelic intellect, in so far as every creature is darkness in comparison with the immensity of the Divine light: and this obscurity suffices for faith.

**Reply to Objection 3:** In the original state there was no hearing anything from man speaking outwardly, but there was from God inspiring inwardly: thus the prophets heard, as expressed by the Ps. 84:9: "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me."

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## Whether in the demons there is faith?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that the demons have no faith. For Augustine says (De Praedest. Sanct. v) that "faith depends on the believer's will": and this is a good will, since by it man wishes to believe in God. Since then no deliberate will of the demons is good, as stated above ([FP, Question \[64\], Article \[2\]](#), ad 5), it seems that in the demons there is no faith.

**Objection 2:** Further, faith is a gift of Divine grace, according to Eph. 2:8: "By grace you are saved through faith... for it is the gift of God." Now, according to a gloss on Osee 3:1, "They look to strange gods, and love the husks of the grapes," the demons lost their gifts of grace by sinning. Therefore faith did not remain in the demons after they sinned.

**Objection 3:** Further, unbelief would seem to be graver than other sins, as Augustine observes (Tract. lxxxix in Joan.) on Jn. 15:22, "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin." Now the sin of unbelief is in some men. Consequently, if the demons have faith, some men would be guilty of a sin graver than that of the demons, which seems unreasonable. Therefore in the demons there is no faith.

**On the contrary,** It is written ([James 2:19](#)): "The devils... believe and tremble."

**I answer that,** As stated above ([Question \[1\], Article \[4\]; Question \[2\], Article \[1\]](#)), the believer's intellect assents to that which he believes, not because he sees it either in itself, or by resolving it to first self-evident principles, but because his will commands his intellect to assent. Now, that the will moves the intellect to assent, may be due to two causes. First, through the will being directed to the good, and in this way, to believe is a praiseworthy action. Secondly, because the intellect is convinced that it ought to believe what is said, though that

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God, were to foretell something, and were to give a sign, by raising a dead person to life, the intellect of a witness would be convinced so as to recognize clearly that God, Who lieth not, was speaking, although the thing itself foretold would not be evident in itself, and consequently the essence of faith would not be removed.

Accordingly we must say that faith is commended in the first sense in the faithful of Christ: and in this way faith is not in the demons, but only in the second way, for they see many evident signs, whereby they recognize that the teaching of the Church is from God, although they do not see the things themselves that the Church teaches, for instance that there are three Persons in God, and so forth.

**Reply to Objection 1:** The demons are, in a way, compelled to believe, by the evidence of signs, and so their will deserves no praise for their belief.

**Reply to Objection 2:** Faith, which is a gift of grace, inclines man to believe, by giving him a certain affection for the good, even when that faith is lifeless. Consequently the faith which the demons have, is not a gift of grace. Rather are they compelled to believe through their natural intellectual acumen.

**Reply to Objection 3:** The very fact that the signs of faith are so evident, that the demons are compelled to believe, is displeasing to them, so that their malice is by no means diminished by their believe.

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## Whether a man who disbelieves one article of faith, can have lifeless faith in the other articles?

**Objection 1:** It would seem that a heretic who disbelieves one article of faith, can have lifeless faith in the other articles. For the natural intellect of a heretic is not more able than that of a catholic. Now a catholic's intellect needs the aid of the gift of faith in order to believe any article whatever of faith. Therefore it seems that heretics cannot believe any articles of faith without the gift of lifeless faith.

**Objection 2:** Further, just as faith contains many articles, so does one science, viz. geometry, contain many conclusions. Now a man may possess the science of geometry as to some geometrical conclusions, and yet be ignorant of other conclusions. Therefore a man can believe some articles of faith without believing the others.

**Objection 3:** Further, just as man obeys God in believing the articles of faith, so does he also in keeping the commandments of the Law. Now a man can obey some commandments, and disobey others. Therefore he can believe some articles, and disbelieve others.

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contrary to faith. Now charity does not remain in a man after one mortal sin. Therefore  
neither does faith, after a man disbelieves one article.

***I answer that,*** Neither living nor lifeless faith remains in a heretic who disbelieves one article of faith.

The reason of this is that the species of every habit depends on the formal aspect of the object, without which the species of the habit cannot remain. Now the formal object of faith is the First Truth, as manifested in Holy Writ and the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth. Consequently whoever does not adhere, as to an infallible and Divine rule, to the teaching of the Church, which proceeds from the First Truth manifested in Holy Writ, has not the habit of faith, but holds that which is of faith otherwise than by faith. Even so, it is evident that a man whose mind holds a conclusion without knowing how it is proved, has not scientific knowledge, but merely an opinion about it. Now it is manifest that he who adheres to the teaching of the Church, as to an infallible rule, assents to whatever the Church teaches; otherwise, if, of the things taught by the Church, he holds what he chooses to hold, and rejects what he chooses to reject, he no longer adheres to the teaching of the Church as to an infallible rule, but to his own will. Hence it is evident that a heretic who obstinately disbelieves one article of faith, is not prepared to follow the teaching of the Church in all things; but if he is not obstinate, he is no longer in heresy but only in error. Therefore it is clear that such a heretic with regard to one article has no faith in the other articles, but only a kind of opinion in accordance with his own will.

***Reply to Objection 1:*** A heretic does not hold the other articles of faith, about which he does not err, in the same way as one of the faithful does, namely by adhering simply to the Divine Truth, because in order to do so, a man needs the help of the habit of faith; but he holds the things that are of faith, by his own will and judgment.

***Reply to Objection 2:*** The various conclusions of a science have their respective means of demonstration, one of which may be known without another, so that we may know some conclusions of a science without knowing the others. On the other hand faith adheres to all the articles of faith by reason of one mean, viz. on account of the First Truth proposed to us in Scriptures, according to the teaching of the Church who has the right understanding of them. Hence whoever abandons this mean is altogether lacking in faith.

***Reply to Objection 3:*** The various precepts of the Law may be referred either to their respective proximate motives, and thus one can be kept without another; or to their primary motive, which is perfect obedience to God, in which a man fails whenever he breaks one commandment, according to James 2:10: "Whosoever shall... offend in one point is become guilty of all."

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**Whether faith can be greater in one man than in another?**

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quantity of a habit is taken from its object. Now whoever has faith believes everything that is of faith, since by failing in one point, a man loses his faith altogether, as stated above ([Article \[3\]](#)). Therefore it seems that faith cannot be greater in one than in another.

**Objection 2:** Further, those things which consist in something supreme cannot be "more" or "less." Now faith consists in something supreme, because it requires that man should adhere to the First Truth above all things. Therefore faith cannot be "more" or "less."

**Objection 3:** Further, faith is to knowledge by grace, as the understanding of principles is to natural knowledge, since the articles of faith are the first principles of knowledge by grace, as was shown above ([Question \[1\]](#), [Article \[7\]](#)). Now the understanding of principles is possessed in equal degree by all men. Therefore faith is possessed in equal degree by all the faithful.

**On the contrary,** Wherever we find great and little, there we find more or less. Now in the matter of faith we find great and little, for Our Lord said to Peter ([Mt. 14:31](#)): "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" And to the woman he said ([Mt. 15: 28](#)): "O woman, great is thy faith!" Therefore faith can be greater in one than in another.

**I answer that,** As stated above ([FS, Question \[52\]](#), [Articles \[1\],2](#); [FS, Question \[112\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#)), the quantity of a habit may be considered from two points of view: first, on the part of the object; secondly, on the part of its participation by the subject.

Now the object of faith may be considered in two ways: first, in respect of its formal aspect; secondly, in respect of the material object which is proposed to be believed. Now the formal object of faith is one and simple, namely the First Truth, as stated above ([Question \[1\]](#), [Article \[1\]](#)). Hence in this respect there is no diversity of faith among believers, but it is specifically one in all, as stated above ([Question \[4\]](#), [Article \[6\]](#)). But the things which are proposed as the matter of our belief are many and can be received more or less explicitly; and in this respect one man can believe explicitly more things than another, so that faith can be greater in one man on account of its being more explicit.

If, on the other hand, we consider faith from the point of view of its participation by the subject, this happens in two ways, since the act of faith proceeds both from the intellect and from the will, as stated above ([Question \[2\]](#), [Articles \[1\],2](#); [Question \[4\]](#), [Article \[2\]](#)). Consequently a man's faith may be described as being greater, in one way, on the part of his intellect, on account of its greater certitude and firmness, and, in another way, on the part of his will, on account of his greater promptitude, devotion, or confidence.

**Reply to Objection 1:** A man who obstinately disbelieves a thing that is of faith, has not the habit of faith, and yet he who does not explicitly believe all, while he is prepared to believe all, has that habit. In this respect, one man has greater faith than another, on the part of the object, in so far as he believes more things, as stated above.

**Reply to Objection 2:** It is essential to faith that one should give the first place to the First Truth. But among those who do this, some submit to it with greater certitude and devotion than others; and in this way faith is greater in one than in another.

**Reply to Objection 3:** The understanding of principles results from man's very nature, which is equally shared by all: whereas faith results from the gift of grace, which is not equally in all, as explained above ([FS, Question \[112\]](#), [Article \[4\]](#)). Hence the comparison fails.

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greater capacity of intellect.

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